

As the son of a Marine combat veteran at Guadalcanal, I understand the struggles and sacrifices our military and their families endure. I am proud of my father's duty and am honored to represent a district rich with America's heroes. Upstate New York has a distinct heritage of selfless commitment to our nation. I believe we must do everything we can to provide veterans with the highest quality care and services. I am dedicated to improving our veterans' quality of life, health care and economic assistance, as well as providing more easily accessible services.

Local veterans who have served our nation are well-trained individuals of tremendous character. Congress should support policies that properly support veterans and facilitate integrating them into the workforce.

I am a sponsor of The Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act which would provides a cost of living increase to veterans' disability compensation rates. This legislation would put more well-earned dollars into the pockets of our veterans—enabling them to keep up with rising consumer costs and putting more money into the economy, thereby spurring job creation.

We must also invest in the advanced education of our veterans, enabling them to better contribute to our economy. To that end, I am a strong supporter of the Restoring GI Bill Fairness Act. The bill extends the VA's ability to cover tuition and fees for veterans already attending non-public colleges that have a cost exceeding \$17,500 a year. This fully-paid for bill is a great investment in our veterans and economy Upstate—and it is simply the right thing to do.

Unfortunately, the unemployment rate for members of the National Guard and Reserve is as high as 20 percent. Members of our Reserve and National Guard are often overlooked for positions because employers are uneasy about hiring an individual who may be called away at any time. This is unacceptable. I am supporting a bill called the “Hire a Hero Act” which allows certain small business employers a work opportunity tax credit for hiring a member of the Ready Reserve or the National Guard. By giving employers incentive to hire citizen-soldiers, we can lower this high rate of unemployment and place worthy individuals in good jobs—thus growing our economy.

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